

CLAIMS:

1. A method for collecting location-dependent data in a central data collection point, comprising the steps of:
- 5 - collecting location dependent data from a data source, in a nearby portable communications device;
- transmitting the collected data to a base station of the portable communications device; and
- communicating the collected data along with a location identifier to the
- 10 data collection point.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the location identifier is added to the data by the base station.
- 15 3. A method according to claim 1 wherein the location identifier is included in the data collected from the data source and transmitted to the base station.
4. A method according to claim 1 in which the location identifier is
- 20 supplied by a location-aware component within the portable communications device.
5. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the portable communications device incorporates an environmental sensor as the data source,
- 25 which provides information relating to environmental conditions in the immediate locality of the portable communications device.
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the environmental sensor provides information representing at least one of: temperature, air pressure,
- 30 humidity, radiation, air contaminant levels, acoustic noise, magnetic fields, electromagnetic and/or radio signal levels, light levels, pollen count, pheromone levels.

7. A method according to claim 2 wherein the transmitted data comprises an identifier identifying the portable communications device, sent with the location identifier; and the data is used to determine the position and speed of motion of the portable communications device.

8. A method according to claim 7 wherein the portable communications device is carried in a vehicle, and the collected data is used to derive location, speed and direction information relating to that vehicle.

9. A method according to claim 8 wherein data collected from numerous portable communications device carried in respective vehicles is used to derive average speed and direction information relating to traffic in a certain location.

10. A method according to claim 8 or 9 wherein the derived speed and direction data is used to control traffic in the respective location.

11. A method according to any of claims 1-4 or 7-10 wherein an external data source wirelessly transmits data to the portable communications device.

12. A method according to claim 11 wherein the external data source transmits the data by very short range radio transmission.

13. A method according to claim 12 wherein the data transmitted by the very short range radio transmission comprises information relating to meter readings.

14. A method according to any of claims 11-13 in which the transmitted data incorporates an identifier identifying the transmitter, which is used as the location identifier.

15. A method according to any preceding claim in which the portable communications device is a mobile telephone.

5 16. A method according to claim 4 or any claim dependent on claim 4 wherein the location aware component is a GPS receiver built in to the portable communications device.

17. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the data is communicated to the data collection point over a telephone network.

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18. A method substantially as described herein, with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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19. A portable communications device for use in a method according to claim 5 or any claim dependent on claim 5, comprising:

- a power source;
- an environmental sensor for detecting environmental conditions in the locality of the device, and for providing corresponding data to communications circuitry; and
- 20 - communications circuitry for transmitting the data to a base station.

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20. A device according to claim 19 wherein the environmental sensor provides information representing at least one of: temperature, air pressure, humidity, radiation, air contaminant levels, acoustic noise, magnetic fields, electromagnetic and/or radio signal levels, light levels, pollen count, pheromone levels.

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21. A portable communications device for use in a method according to claim 11 or any claim dependent on claim 11, comprising:

- a power source;
- a receiver for receiving data from an external data source, and for providing corresponding data to communications circuitry; and

- communications circuitry for transmitting the data to a base station.

22. A portable communications device substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.